

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-15. (canceled)

Claim 16 (currently amended): A hydrodynamic coupling, comprising:

a pump blade wheel and a turbine blade wheel, which together form at least one toroidal operating space capable of receiving an operating medium;

a bell-shaped housing containing said pump blade wheel at least partially in an axial direction, said housing, said pump blade wheel, and said turbine blade wheel forming an intermediate space between said housing and said pump blade wheel and between said housing and said turbine blade wheel;

said pump blade wheel defining at least one connection channel between said toroidal operating space and said intermediate space, said connection channel having at least one directional component oriented essentially tangential to the contour of the circulation of said operating medium in an operating state between said pump blade wheel and said turbine blade wheel, such that a rinsing effect of the operating medium is achieved in the intermediate space, wherein said connection channel is oriented in the direction of the circulation contour of the flow circulation of the operating medium in said operating state between said pump blade wheel and said turbine blade wheel.

Claim 17 (previously presented): A hydrodynamic coupling according to Claim 16, wherein said housing surrounds the coupling in said operating state.

Claim 18 (previously presented): A hydrodynamic coupling according to Claim 17, wherein said housing is coupled at least indirectly to said pump blade wheel.

Claim 19 (previously presented): A hydrodynamic coupling according to Claim 17, wherein said housing is coupled at least indirectly to said turbine blade wheel.

Claim 20 (canceled)

Claim 21 (previously presented): A hydrodynamic coupling according to Claim 16, wherein said connection channel forms a straight line progression free of directional changes.

Claim 22 (currently amended): A hydrodynamic coupling according to Claim 16, wherein said pump blade wheel defines ~~many~~ a plurality of connection channels.

Claim 23 (currently amended): ~~A hydrodynamic coupling according to Claim 22, A~~
hydrodynamic coupling, comprising:

a pump blade wheel and a turbine blade wheel, which together form at least one toroidal operating space capable of receiving an operating medium;

a bell-shaped housing containing said pump blade wheel at least partially in an axial direction, said housing, said pump blade wheel, and said turbine blade wheel forming an intermediate space between said housing and said pump blade wheel and between said housing and said turbine blade wheel;

said pump blade wheel defining at least one connection channel between said toroidal operating space and said intermediate space, said connection channel having at least one directional component oriented essentially tangential to the contour of the circulation of said operating medium in an operating state between said pump blade wheel and said turbine blade wheel, such that a rinsing effect of the operating medium is achieved in the intermediate space;

wherein said pump blade wheel defines a plurality of connection channels, and further wherein said connection channels are arranged on a theoretical, hypothetical circumferential line of said pump blade wheel, said circumferential line being parallel to a central plane between said pump blade wheel and said turbine blade wheel.

Claim 24 (canceled)

Claim 25 (currently amended): ~~A hydrodynamic coupling according to Claim 22, A~~
hydrodynamic coupling, comprising:

a pump blade wheel and a turbine blade wheel, which together form at least one toroidal operating space capable of receiving an operating medium;

a bell-shaped housing containing said pump blade wheel at least partially in an axial direction, said housing, said pump blade wheel, and said turbine blade wheel forming an intermediate space between said housing and said pump blade wheel and between said housing and said turbine blade wheel;

said pump blade wheel defining at least one connection channel between said toroidal operating space and said intermediate space, said connection channel having at least one directional component oriented essentially tangential to the contour of the circulation of said operating medium in an operating state between said pump blade wheel and said turbine blade wheel, such that a rinsing effect of the operating medium is achieved in the intermediate space;

wherein said pump blade wheel defines a plurality of connection channels, and further wherein the distance between adjacent connection channels is constant.

Claim 26 (currently amended): ~~A hydrodynamic coupling according to Claim 16, A~~
hydrodynamic coupling, comprising:

a pump blade wheel and a turbine blade wheel, which together form at least one toroidal operating space capable of receiving an operating medium;

a bell-shaped housing containing said pump blade wheel at least partially in an axial direction, said housing, said pump blade wheel, and said turbine blade wheel forming an intermediate space between said housing and said pump blade wheel and between said housing and said turbine blade wheel;

said pump blade wheel defining at least one connection channel between said toroidal operating space and said intermediate space, said connection channel having at least one directional component oriented essentially tangential to the contour of the circulation of said operating medium in an operating state between said pump blade wheel and said turbine blade wheel, such that a rinsing effect of the operating medium is achieved in the intermediate space, wherein the cross-section of said connection channel is constant from an inner to an outer circumference of said pump blade wheel.

Claim 27 (previously presented): A hydrodynamic coupling according to Claim 16, wherein said connection channel includes at least one cross-sectional change between said inner and outer circumference of said pump blade wheel.

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Claim 28 (previously presented): A hydrodynamic coupling according to Claim 27, wherein said connection channel is tapered in the direction of said outer circumference.

Claim 29 (previously presented): A hydrodynamic coupling according to Claim 16, wherein the cross-section of said connection channel is circular.

Claim 30 (previously presented): A hydrodynamic coupling according to Claim 16, wherein the cross-section of said connection channel is oval.